DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 115 640 SP 009 711

TITLE	Toward Understanding: Human Relations in Maryland Schools.
INSTITUTION	Maryland State Dept. of Education, Baltimore.
PUB DATE	Oct 73
NOTE	30p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.95 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; Human Relations Organizations; *Human Relations Programs; Interpersonal Relationship; *Interviews; Opinions; Parent Attitudes; *Race Relations; *Racial Discrimination; *State Departments of Education; Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This report concerns efforts of the Maryland State Department of Education to improve black-white relations throughout the school system. It describes a special staff within the Department of Education whose concerns include institutes and workshops on human relations; recruitment, hiring, and promotion; resolution of intergroup problems; and evaluation of courses, materials, and training programs. It also describes a Human Relations Council, established in May 1973, to promote self-respect and respect for others in students and encourage acceptance of different ethnic and racial groups. The bulk of the document consists of excerpts from taped interviews conducted by a private consultant for the Maryland Board of Education, in which students, teachers, parents, and administrators talked about their views of each other and offered suggestions on what could be done to improve race relations. The excerpts are short quotations which reflect a range of views from hostility and fear to respect and trust, from optimism to pessimism. A questionnaire at the end of the document is intended to generate feedback on this way of presenting information on human relations. (CD)

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TOWARD UNDERSTANDING: Human Relations in Maryland Schools

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October 1973

Foreword

School personnel and people in the community are discussing school human relations problems more freely today. These discussions are long overdue, for in the past we may have ignored the undercurrents of the learning atmosphere in our schools.

While it is gratifying to know that this aspect of education is receiving more attention, we must remain aware of the complications ahead.

Frustrations may arise because human relations problems cannot be solved by a single plan. But human relations does not thrive on mass production. It needs an honest awareness of the nature of the problems, skills in listening and speaking, and an incentive to create new, practical solutions that *really* work. And it needs each of these elements on a one-to-one level.

The position of the Maryland State Department of Education is clear. We are concerned about the child in school — each of more than 900,000 young people in Maryland. The Department has chosen the role as active catalyst in the school human relations field.

While we hope that this publication informs you of progress already being made in Maryland public schools, we also hope that it sharpens each reader's perspective, encouraging a more thoughtful education for each individual — beginning with the self.

James A. Sensenbaugh
State Superintendent of Schools

The State of the Art

Human relations is a field of growing concern to the school. Educators realize that negative human behavior has a detrimental effect on students, robbing them of opportunities to achieve their best. School communities marked by undertones of discontent or open conflict transfer the emphasis from learning and understanding to disorder.

The schools are especially no longer willing to ignore the problems of race relations. This phase of human interaction is an enigma, for the human element is at once its problem and its solution. Because this field is tied so closely to each individual's beliefs, feelings, ethics, commitments, and experiences, it eludes concrete definition and prescription. Human relations is an intangible field that requires special techniques to foster understanding and to assure acceptable behavior within the school and its community.

Tangible Progress

The Maryland State Department of Education and many local school systems have begun to deal with human relations problems in the schools. In an effort to improve conditions, some systems have hired specialists, held workshops, established trouble-shooting committees, appointed special advisory councils, and drafted policy statements and plans of action.

A biracial staff at the State level offers professional assistance to Maryland educational groups in both technical and human areas. Among this State Department of Education staff's immediate concerns are institutes and workshops; recruitment, hiring, and promotional policies; the reduction and resolution of intergroup problems and confrontations; and the evaluation of courses, instructional materials, and training programs. The present staff also established the foundation for the appointment of a State Advisory Council in Human Relations and is organizing local coordinating councils and school conflict teams.

The Human Relations Advisory Council of the Maryland State Department of Education was established in May of 1973. The Council's specific objectives will be related to the implementation of priority concerns of the Maryland State Board of Education as set forth in the Action Plan of the Maryland State Department of Education, 1972:

> To ensure that each student completing his elementary-secondary school program demonstrates respect for self and the rights of others.
>
> By 1977, all students will have increased knowledge and increased acceptance of and respect for people who are of different ethnic or racial background.

The Council will also encourage and advise on the development and implementation of human relations programs, provide liaison between the State Department of Education and other agencies concerned with intergroup problems, provide an information service on human relations programs, help to interpret human relations programs in education, and advise on the organizing of human relations coordinating councils in each of the 24 local school systems.

Workshops in human relations were conducted in Carroll, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Somerset, and Queen Anne's counties during the summer of 1972. A number of counties also conducted workshops during the summer of 1973. Participants credit these workshops with helping them to understand themselves and their students, for increasing their knowledge of the psychological and sociological aspects of the field, and for encouraging them to structure human relations activities into their schools and classrooms.

Each workshop was structured to meet the apparent needs of a local school system. Consultants visiting a cross-section of all workshops recorded a variety of workshop goals that gave the sessions viable objectives:

- to develop an understanding of the meaning of human relations in both its broad and narrow connotations
- to examine the psychological and sociological causes and roots of problems between people and groups of people, particularly in a school setting
- to develop an increased knowledge and an increased acceptance and respect for people who are of different ethnic or social backgrounds
- to demonstrate that interpersonal relationships are of extreme importance to a formal organization, especially a public school

- to help teachers see their role as one who does not merely display an attitude of expertise within a chosen academic field, but also reflects a basic and genuine concern with persons
- to identify and clarify one's own value system as it relates to his rights
- to test the meaning of one's values with others
- to explore the predicament of the minority group if basic rights are denied by the majority
- to explore some subtle and not so subtle ways rights are frequently denied the individual — the minority group in the larger society
- to explore human rights implications of stereotyping, segregation, grouping, racism
- to explore the nature of institutionalized racism and how it adversely affects minority and individual rights
- to explore student rights within the school system
- to increase teacher acceptance of all children
- to develop a better understanding and acceptance of black culture by white teachers
- to decrease the self-imposed segregation among teachers during faculty meetings, inservice sessions, etc.
- to develop a new consciousness of the race problem
- to develop new attitudes, behavior, and procedures in relationship to the problem
- to develop motivation and skills to act against the race problem, and for positive objectives, tasks, and strategies of human relations

The procedures utilized by the workshops reflected a recognized need for individually prescribed methods to deal with the needs of a community. Some areas simply relied upon textbooks and class discussions. Others wove in films, panel discussions, and lectures. Workshops that were the most active used a variety of techniques such as role-playing, small group work sessions, sociodrama, open sharing of feelings and attitudes, and group development of positive plans of action.

In addition to the county workshops, Towson State College and the National Conference of Christians and Jews cosponsored a "Human Relations Institute on Intergroup Education." The course allowed students to examine and evaluate human relations problems especially relative to metropolitan Baltimore.

Such tangible steps toward progress must now be bolstered by evidence of a deeper understanding of the need for thoughtful changes.

An Approach To Understanding

Although Maryland has taken some effective first steps toward improving human relations in the schools, the basic issues themselves persist. Individuals express a willingness to solve the human relations problems but admit that they frequently are not aware of the point of view of the "other side." Both sides are often guilty of creating their own impression of the nature of the problem without taking the time to listen objectively for honest insight.

The human relations staff of the Maryland State Department of Education employed a consultant to visit some human relations projects and to interview randomly students, parents, teachers, and administrators in Maryland. Each anonymous interview was taped and later reviewed for dialogue that offered insight into the nature of the issues that become human relations problems.

The following account of problems is not a fictitious list spun by specialists in the field. It is not the point of view of a single writer. Rather it is the compilation of voices presenting a complex human dilemma. And it is an approach to understanding.

We have looked without seeing.
We have heard without listening.
We have ignored some problems,
hoping they would go away.

Students React to Race

The racial situation is rough. I don't think there'll be an end in my time. There'll be a change, but no end.

What's causing the problems? . . . . They're just thinking black. Thinking black blocks out everything. . . . They try to be so bad!

Black kids aren't hostile against us. Just against the generations before.

Association does not always bring assimilation. . . . If you can take the time to be independent and think for yourself, it doesn't really matter.

I always listen and say, "If it were coming from a black person, would I accept the same?" . . . If I feel that it is pointed racially, I just get unhinged.

Everybody wants to talk. But nobody has time to listen.

I believe some of the white kids want to be friendly, but they're scared what their white friends might say. That's the whole problem. Or a black kid might fear what their black friends might say. So they keep to themselves.

Students React to Social Incidents

In some cases they start fights 'cause they feel if they fight and beat somebody this puts them up high. . . . I beat you. That makes me king. Most fights are started by simple disagreement.

The blacks tell us, "When you see us coming down the hall, move to one side." I know a guy who does. I don't see no sense to it.

Interracial dating isn't really common yet. But it will probably be in the next generation. Just look how much less prejudiced we are than our parents.

When our Black Afro Club held a dance, only about four white couples showed up. We put our money in their pockets for their clubs, but they don't. We really were upset about that.

Students React to Classroom Incidents

When we discuss racial issues in history class, it's pretty good. Both sides are honest, and it stays in the classroom. It doesn't go out into fights or wind up with people calling each other "racist."

I don't know whether the schools mean to do this, but like in a class they have thirty whites and two blacks; and the blacks say, "They're trying to keep us away from each other so there won't be no trouble."

We have these movies in class about slaves, and the blacks don't like it, so they get up and walk out—. They don't like to be talked about. Maybe they think we're making fun of them.

When I went to junior high, the black kids used to be quiet. Now they say what they feel. Then, they let the whites take over; and you knew it wasn't really that way—white superiority—. . . . Now they're putting us in our place.

Students React to Teachers

A lot of white teachers don't like blacks. And black teachers don't like white students. And teachers don't like each other—black and white. □

I look at my white teachers as people until they prove otherwise. ■

Last year the school administrators said they were going to do something about our cheerleader problem, but this year we don't see any changes. □

Black students say, "We're going to do what we want to do." The teachers say, "You're not going to. You'll leave school before you do." A lot of them just leave. □

The young teachers and the students will get along very well because their situations are more closely related. . . . Older teachers get along only if they can bridge the gap. □

She couldn't teach black studies. She's not black herself. . . . We didn't study anything really. You can't go by a book which a white man wrote hisself. ■

Students React to the Community-at-Large

My parents don't care that I have black friends. . . . But a lot of other kids' parents get disgusted. □

My parents say, "You've got to go to school with them, and you're going to have to live with them. Don't do what they tell you. If you do, you don't know what would happen. The whites should have it their way and the blacks, their way." □

In our rural community, they don't want to see the blacks get anywhere. They want us to stay like it is. . . . They give you snotty looks. . . . They stare at you. . . . I can feel it. It's not like in the city. ■

A colored family moved into our town. The adults told them they'd better leave or they'd burn their house down. And the colored people were nice about it. They said, "Why don't you want our kind of people?" . . . And they moved. □

A new policy of a college to actively seek blacks annoys me. . . . They need me so they can look good. ■

Parents React to Teachers

Parents figure that because of tenure they can't fight city hall. No matter how much a teacher is wrong or how little he teaches—you've had it. And even if you succeed in getting the teacher out of that school, they're only stuck in another school where somebody else's children are suffering.

There is definitely no understanding between the blacks and whites. . . . It's all in getting to know people. I think it's just this set rule that we blacks are the type of people who can't be trusted. And the teachers, naturally, are frightened of them.

The younger teachers are better fit. They are morally honest and face the problems as they are. The other generation didn't have that.

I've never had good luck talking with teachers about problems. . . . I raise my voice and they get upset and everyone's on the defensive. . . . They're constantly making excuses.

I don't know—but I could almost say—that even on the faculty, those few black teachers have never been asked into the homes of the white people to eat dinner or to come as a foursome or something. ■

Most teachers go out of their way to help children—and some too far. They give a one-to-one teaching ratio at times which is not teaching the child responsibility, and they gloss over your child's deficiencies.

Teachers have to start accepting blame. If you're a working man and don't produce, you get fired. . . . Teachers must accept responsibility.

Parents React to Administrators

Doesn't anyone care anymore? What about kids?

In so many areas, parents want to get involved but don't know how. . . . They're afraid of being turned off . . . of being made to feel inferior.

The child who causes trouble needs the help. He shouldn't be thrown around from school to school. He needs a counselor—a social worker. . . . The ratio between counselor and students is horrible.

Black parents don't feel comfortable in what used to be the all-white school. . . . They don't feel welcome. . . . Parents that used to be very active in the black schools never go to the mixed one.

There should be a better racial balance in special education classes—or maybe a central location where they all could be bussed. . . . It's enough for a child to contend with a handicap—but if there's a racial problem, too, that only adds to their handicap.

In our neighborhood, all the whites are running. Our schools have become 80 to 85 percent black. We are trying hard to stay, but the schools are making it very difficult. . . . They say they want me, and they say they want me to stay, and they say it's terrible when everyone runs—but what are they doing to keep me here? What are they doing for my child?

They're nice to me. They've got to have their "token black." But when a group of us comes, it's different!

The black man has been bussed all of his life to go to school. . . . This was no big issue. As long as he was being bussed, nothing was said about it. . . . The white high school was four blocks from me, but I had to go six miles to a black high school. It was all right.

Parents React to Other Parents

You can see why children are turning off their parents. Parents tell them one thing and do another. . . . They say, in school get along with them, but don't bring them home and don't associate with them in the neighborhood.

Parents are afraid for their children's safety. I keep mine home from events or make sure I'm working there in some capacity.

My children have grown up with terror in the schools. They don't know any different.

Parents would much rather talk around their own little circle and hash out the problem and think they've got it solved—and then forget about it—and just keep complaining the whole year.

Parents must get more involved and work with their children. Parents believe what their children tell them because they do not want to find out any other way.

The blacks we know want the same things for their children that we want. And they are just as uncomfortable with the problem.

Maybe black parents in a rural area think they're not educated enough to feel that they can express themselves adequately. But often I am the only black or we're the only [illegible]s, that attend school. The first time I went, they were surprised to see me; but they got over it.

Blacks know that to go back to districts is stepping backwards. And they don't intend to move an inch backwards—at the expense of their own people.

Parents React to Young People

If a black boy is interested in a white girl on a very friendly basis, the black girl doesn't like it and thinks, "What's wrong with me? Why is he looking at her?" So she hates her for that reason. But she hated her from yesterday because of the social standards, the clothes, and because this girl has had every advantage. So not only does she hate her once; she hates her twice. . . . It is very bad.

When you get down to the ones who don't care about school, this is where your racial problem comes in.

We're not going to have a problem in another year or so, because as soon as the poorer black kids are of age, they'll drop out.

The black students are as frightened as the white teachers are. . . . This is why they hang in groups and won't let go. . . . I've known some fine kids who try to act tough from fear.

Black students feel annoyed when remedial attention is given to them. . . . But if it is not given, they will never catch up.

My son is called an Uncle Tom, a cream puff, by his black friends. . . . Actually, my son couldn't get along with his own race. He is more popular with whites.

I believe my daughter is prejudiced. . . . She would never come out and say it because she knows I would not approve. . . . If she had to make a preference, it would be black over white.

At school the guns come out, and the hitting comes out, and the stealing comes out. But nobody sees anything.

Black girls don't go to dances. They don't have anyone to dance with.

White children in the school will help me or share confidences with me because I am a teacher's aide. And those same children will see me on the street and will be afraid to speak. They will look at me as if to say, "Please don't say anything to me because of my parents. . . ." You could see the fear registering in their eyes. This would hurt me so much.

I was a victim of prejudice in an all-black school. I was the first black complexioned child that they could remember that had ever received a scholarship. When I earned it, some of the suppliers in the area went to the principal and told him to give it to a lighter skinned child. And he called my mother and told her that I earned it and that I was going to get it. . . . But they cut it off. They took it from me.

Counselors don't counsel our black children toward college—just toward general educations.

I can't speak too much about it. I've heard indirectly reports of things. . . . My own child has no prejudices. We don't either, except what's fair for one is fair for the other. You shouldn't bend over backwards to have reverse discrimination.

Parents React to the Community-at-Large

There has to be some progress. But it's at such a slow pace you don't see it.

When you hear a white man say, "I know black people," he doesn't. Nobody has ever been in his position. When somebody says, "I know how you feel," I look. I wonder, because I know they don't know what they're talking about. . . . They try to find out, but deep down inside you don't know.

Whites will socialize with you in outer areas; sometimes they'll carry you into their homes; but are they willing to take you out anywhere on a one-to-one basis in an all-white area and be chummy with you?

The hillbillies moved out of the low economic areas a lot faster than the blacks are doing. But they had their color going for them. They could assimilate.

Most of my neighbors are middle-aged or older, and they just cannot understand the militancy—In fact, they have difficulty relating to black teenagers in the community.

The school is not entirely to blame for this problem. It's in the community, the home.

I don't think things would have gotten on as well as they have if we had not had the riots and the confrontations. . . . It took that. And maybe now we're sliding back again. . . . I have to be honest enough to admit what improvement we have wouldn't have happened without them.

One or two generations isn't really a long time when you measure it against eternity. . . . But it's a long time when you only have one of them to live yourself.

Teachers React to Students

The white kids don't call them "niggers" in the halls, but by ignoring them they give unspoken abuse.

The white students don't really understand the blacks. And they don't care enough to. They have no reason to now. They're happy in their own worlds. . . . They have no reason to try to make an effort to understand them.

One boy said, "When I was growing up I wasn't supposed to play with 'those niggers' at all. But now I call them 'blacks' and I have some black friends. And hopefully, maybe my kids won't know the difference."

A lot of student reactions are gut reactions.

Usually the blacks who are more academically able are the ones who have white friends.

I wonder where the black girls fit into the picture. Do they resent the white girls? . . . I see this backfiring if the white girls keep socializing with the black boys. Where does this leave the black girl? To begin with, she's a minority in the school, but now she turns out to be a minority within the females. . . . The future human relations problems will be with the black girl.

The athletes have racially-mixed friendships—but few others do.

You can't treat students all equally. You treat them according to what their needs are.

Black children have a very poor self-concept. Placing black teachers in their elementary schools would help.

You have instances in classes where black kids are worked around. For instance, black kids were used only now and again in areas where cash registers were used—or in other responsible areas in the class.

We discuss the civil rights movement, and many of our black children are surprised to learn about the Jim Crow laws. It was not part of their lives.

The instructional needs of the black child in our community are not being met. The black child is of a subculture or different culture. . . . His needs are different and there is nothing in our structure that accounts for this—that accommodates this.

Black studies as a course is a Band-Aid.

What was once the middle class black is feeling the influx of a different type of behavior—ghetto behavior. . . . You're not ready to accept some of the language that's part of their lives. . . . I don't know what the effect will be on the other children.

Our black students in our mixed school wanted to form a black student union, but the administration wouldn't let them.

If I'd lived under the circumstances that some of these children live under, I'd be militant, too!

Teachers React to Other Teachers

Covert prejudice does exist among our faculty. It doesn't bother me; it concerns me. . . . If it's to that level, how can you perpetuate anything good to students?

I admit that I can say and do more things to black students than white teachers could.

It would be rare for a black teacher to be accused of treating white students unfairly. The opposite situation isn't rare.

We have a black teacher who has constantly and continually insisted on rabble-rousing and encouraging black students or converting black students to the "hate whitey" attitudes. This is sad because the black students come to white teachers and discuss the situation and what is going on.

White teachers have trouble relating to blacks. They have to live through similar circumstances. Courses in sensitivity won't really help.

Though the white teachers seem friendly and are never hostile, I often sense a coolness, a distance, almost a fear toward me. I'm not imagining it.

When a white teacher has black friends, the reactions are in undertones. They are talked about by other teachers and students. . . . It's just not done—at least in that particular area where ethnic groups feel threatened by blacks.

When I was being interviewed for my job, the principal asked me point blank "Do you think you can get along in a white situation?"

Every black teacher that I've talked to who was going to teach in a predominantly white school had assumed that all the students were going to be average or above. . . .

I am thoroughly convinced that colleges cannot prepare teachers.

Teachers React to Administration

In our school, the attitude is, "Put your head in the sand." We haven't had any flareups and we're one of the luckiest schools. . . . We feel that as long as the blacks are quiet and aren't causing any problems, that there isn't any problem.

Things get to the point where mandatory situations occur, and this is wrong. I don't think anything should be done by being handed a mandate. . . . Or you're backed into a corner where you've got to do something or you can't come out of the corner otherwise. This is definitely wrong.

Without observing teachers in the classroom, principals have no way of evaluating their attitudes. . . . They don't observe enough.

The ones filled with double talk are not teachers but members of the board of education. . . . They try to pacify both sides. . . . They try to cover up problems. . . . They try to minimize. . . . They try to be too polite.

Teachers React to the Community-at-Large

Parents feel that school is outside their province. That they have no business being in the school. It should be the school's job to go out and say, "It's your right and we'd like you to be involved." But it's easier to go along without them. □

I don't think the white community is willing to accept integration without assimilation. □

There is no real communication between the black and white communities. I don't think we can come up with an educational institution that is not racist until we first eliminate the racism in the community. . . . The school system does reflect the community. □

We always have our little committees, and our little commissions, and our task forces; and they have a tendency to sit in a sort of ivory tower telling other people what they should do. Very few of them actually commit themselves to the actual doing. □

The human relations committees have been—for the most part—a token, "Let's get together for coffee and talk about racism," sort of thing. □

I don't believe things are getting better. . . . It's a time-marking situation. . . . Every year there's a new group of people on the county human relations committee. You have no continuity. You start from point zero every September. □

In our system, I honestly feel that blacks had a better, more well-rounded education when schools were segregated. . . . The minority children are now left out in school social events. . . . Social development has a lot to do with education. ■

Many all-black schools experience the same kinds of problems that mixed schools call "racial." In all-black schools, it's called "socio-economic." □

It's something that the individual builds within himself. . . . Patterns are set by secondary school age. . . . Attitude changes must be begun in the earliest grades. □

In too many instances, people don't want to be different. . . . Some blacks will never trust a white person. . . . Why do some whites look upon blacks as inferior when they know darned well it doesn't hold true?

Administrators React to Students

Terms are thrust at teachers where it will be heard. It's not just a slip of the tongue, but deliberate slander. . . . We've begun to hear, "This *white* school. That *white* teacher."

A black student has told us, "Well, we went to a soul school, and they told us to come up here and raise as much hell as we could." Another student said she had gone to a soul school to help improve her reading, "But all I learned there was to hate the whites."

Maybe there is something subtle in the white student's behavior that may precipitate the attack from a black student.

Teachers are concerned about the segregationist behavior of black children. . . . If a teacher does not make an effort to have a formal seating plan, the black children seat themselves in a separate corner of the room. . . . Of course, a lot of blacks want to preserve their identity.

Students in one school call the reading program discriminatory because it has a black teacher and many black students, making it look like all blacks are low achievers.

One of the problems in biracially mixed groups is that you have so few blacks or so few whites that the few left experience quite a bit of difficulty. . . . If it's a white child, the black children don't take time to understand.

Last year our greatest problem was with a gang of hard-core blacks. . . . These were the ones who were constantly roaming the halls, and this has been a black pattern. . . . We sensed that there was something fairly insidious in this group, and there was nobody on our staff who could help. A black psychologist agreed to come. . . . He said they had to be dispersed. . . . All we knew was we had a problem.

Our black studies program is an elective only. As such, it is a segregated program.

The fighting and the aggressiveness, the foul language, not only among peers but two teachers in the classrooms—these are the things that the middle class student, parent, and teacher find it hard to accept. . . . They say, "Do we lower our standards?"

Things are at a boiling point in the high schools. But the real problems are in the elementary school. This is where things are beginning. And many of them began long before that—before the child came to school.

Administrators React to Teachers

Some of our black teachers say that some white teachers take behaviors from black students that they should not take. And they think the white teachers are afraid to have an encounter with a black student.

I am fully convinced that skin color does not make committed teachers consigned to our children. I have seen black teachers of black children not committed. I have seen white teachers of white children not committed.

A liberal teacher often has to go underground.

Many of the black people that we have in education are not representative of the black community or black students. They're caught up in this thing and don't know where they're going either. They don't know whether they should have black pride or act as a black white man or what. They're under a lot of strain that way—a lot of pressure.

We have one male black faculty member; but he himself is so inflexible. He rejected the behavior of black militant students so much so that we could not think of him as being a person who could talk to these kids.

So many things are done falsely that there is a feeling among people in education that blacks are being put into positions of decision making simply because they are black, not for what they can offer as a person, but as a black person.

One dimension of the problem has nothing to do with race. It has to do with the changing relationships between adults and children, more informality, the breakdown of traditional student behavior patterns, and the breakdown of efforts by teachers to maintain strict discipline.

Administrators React to Administration

A county gets a name as not being kind to black educators. So black teachers bypass them.

By some of the actions of our board of education it looks as if what they're trying to do is, "Let's satisfy them"; but they're not dealing with the issue of, "How do they feel?"

The board of education *may* be sensitive but it does not appear to be so. They appear only to be sensitive to meeting demands rather than really examining what racism is. . . . Without pressure would they act? . . . Do they really want to solve the problem or just quiet it down?

They've promoted me. But I guess it was under pressure.

Our board of education is working on a policy statement guaranteeing specific rights to the blacks. It will be something they can trust, though they won't trust its implementation.

Personnel has had an awful lot to do with it because they were recruiting from all-white schools and saying there weren't any qualified black teachers around.

A principal can look very good in so many other areas that no one notices him in human relations. . . . These principals look upon human relations as just another task the board has asked them to do, and they give it just that much attention. They'll look good. They won't look bad. I know.

Administrators React to the Community-at-Large

We have white families pulling their children out of our school after they have seen the black population ever-increasing. . . . A black teacher said, "These children are bringing their ghetto behavior into the school."

I get this kind of reaction from basically good, decent people: "Why all this attention to this segment of the community?" They're just beginning to get into this thing a little bit.

It was as though the parent sat here in his chair and talked and the son sat there in his chair and talked, and they didn't hear each other.

Schools cannot be made the whipping boy for being unable to do what society must do, because schools are nothing but small parts of this particular society.

Despite everything I can do, I am a white racist. It is what the black activist says of me, and I accept it. I am now labelled a white liberal and like most white liberals, I take offense at what blacks suddenly say about me, "You've outlived your usefulness." And my initial reaction was, "You're going to get the white liberals mad, and they've done a lot for you." But the problem that the black activist feels about the white liberal is that the white liberal has always done the wrong thing; has had good intentions; has always felt guilty about the plight of blacks; but has always wanted to make the determination of what should be done for the blacks, and not let black people work out their own problems. . . .

If white people are made to feel guilty, what results could we expect? It couldn't be desirable. A guilt complex will not lead to open-mindedness, to flexibility, cooperation, understanding, or peace.

The greatest mistake the black community made was the riots of around 1966-67. Whatever we gained, we lost 200-fold.

We're having not only the problems of inner city behavior being brought to the middle class suburban school, but we also are feeling the effects of the "redneck" group who have indoctrinated their kids to anticipate an altercation with a black. . . . White parents are threatening to deal with black students involved in racial incidents in their own way. . . . White students have been ordered by their parents to telephone home as soon as racial incidents occur. Parents arrive immediately, precipitating worse incidents.

I don't approve of bussing for bussing's sake. . . . But there must be a way to achieve integration as early as preschool.

New Directions

The publication returns to the voices of the people for some directions for change. Some of the following suggestions involve simply the commitment of an individual; others would necessitate complicated implementation. Some ideas are viable; others might multiply the problem. Some directions are already being tried; others recreate the impossible dream. We include as many ideas as possible—toward understanding.

The link between the community and the school has got to be the students.

Stop and forget color once in awhile.

If the black kids would just act like they didn't think we hated them, maybe we wouldn't be scared to make friends with them.

Teachers have to stop giving in to black kids' demands. Black kids get away with too much. White kids are treated unfairly.

A black teacher going into a white school must understand he is up against stereotypes. And he must prove the stereotypes right or wrong.

We kids would change faster if our parents allowed us to. It's the parents who need education in race.

I don't really see black-white problems in our school. When you're busy doing stuff together—things that everyone enjoys—then you forget about color.

I just tell my white friends, "[name of black student] is my friend, and if his color bothers you, then you and I don't share enough values to make us friends." That usually makes them ashamed.

I fight with my mind. If you fight them inside, you don't have to beat them outside.

When teachers get ready to come into an educational situation they must realize that they are not there for just one subject. They need to talk about their subject and life and things that revolve around that subject.

If teachers and principals would deal with racial incidents squarely instead of pretending they don't exist, both sides would know where we stand. The administration is never consistent.

The adults are hypocrites. They preach love and brotherhood and understanding. And they don't live it. Why don't you educators work on them first?

They ought to let the kids fight it out. If they go to the principal's office, the black one automatically gets in the most trouble. . . .

I tell my white friends, "Don't get so uptight. Don't look for trouble. Maybe the coloreds are OK guys."

I think there's something you can learn from the classroom. We don't fight in there; we have to listen in there; we talk together in there. Isn't that the natural place to start solving the problem?

I would tell teachers, "You're in a position now where young people are angry because they're more aware of what has been done to them. . . . Prove to students that you can understand both sides. . . . White teachers who have gotten along have a sense of humor and a sense of understanding and they look upon themselves as people."

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Black teachers always seem to try to be fair. Why can't white teachers learn from their example? ☐

If someone would help me get to know someone black, maybe I'd like him. But I'm scared to make the first move. ☐

I would tell students that they are in a shaky situation. What they do can go with them and can be held against them. . . . ☐

You know, we never really give the other side a chance, do we? Not really. We dare them to be perfect. We're not. ☐

Well, my own children won't live in a home like mine. I'll tell them they can make their own friends—and I'll mean it! ☐

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I am really concerned about some of the things that are happening. I am hoping sincerely that this (interview) is not just some gesture—that it will accomplish something. Because so many times in the past people have been given ideas that have never materialized. There's a certain amount of terrible disbelief in things that have been established.

Just knowing that the school human relations committee was there . . . just having the communication—helped.

If we can trust our children to primarily white teachers—which the school has—I think we should try to be more active in school.

We are so lucky that we can afford to take our daughter out of this racially-tense school and put her in private school.

When you tell a child something you must be able to back it with a good reason that he can believe.

I think the school should discuss the dilemma of black identity openly.

My husband and I have a mixed marriage. . . . We seem to help the school by our example and insight. . . . Parents call us for help.

The best way to give the black man justice is to be honest with him. You're not fooling him when you're telling him. "We're for you," and you turn him off.

Teachers should not have a choice of where they want to teach. They should be sent.

A Montessori program for preschool blacks would be a beautiful thing.

Anything that seemed to be a problem—or that could develop into something more serious—if I go into the school and talk to them and possibly even got the child involved and talked to him—that straightened itself out.

The more activities you give a child to do, the better off you are.

We need counselors who can relate to black children. . . . Students have trouble finding teachers they can talk to, too.

I haven't had too much problem with (my children's) white teachers being over-prejudiced because I keep myself involved with my children in the school. If I know that there is a pressure being applied, I'm there.

You've got to let them know that they can pick their own friends and that there won't be any retaliation from you or from home when they do it. Children can live with what the neighbors think if their parents don't turn them off.

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If you had a parent liaison—someone who wasn't considered "professional"—a more down-to-earth type person the parents could relate to—the parents would become more active. □

I don't understand. . . . When I substitute I can correct students—even insult them. They take it. . . . Parents in the school help discipline. □

When a child knows that a teacher cares for him as a person and wants him to accomplish, the teacher will get better results. □

Be able to tell children, "I'm sorry; I made a mistake." □

The tone set by the principal can make or break a school. □

The initial contact between teacher and parent should come from the parent being interested and motivated by her child. . . . And this is the gap that gets wider all the time. ■

They've got to get these young (black) children out of their present environment, even if they have to take them out of their homes and put them into boarding schools. □

When I get angry, I fight back. I find all the right places to make a complaint. □

They need day care centers that would serve two purposes: (1) the children would be safe while the mothers worked, and (2) the children could be taught at the same time. □

I think teachers need to be more professional. . . . They act more like students than the students themselves . . . their speech, their dress, their lack of discipline. □

Be what you are. If you have a problem adjusting, say it—because you don't fool people. And they know when you're telling the truth. And they know when you're there just for a cause or just to save face. This is a basic problem. ■

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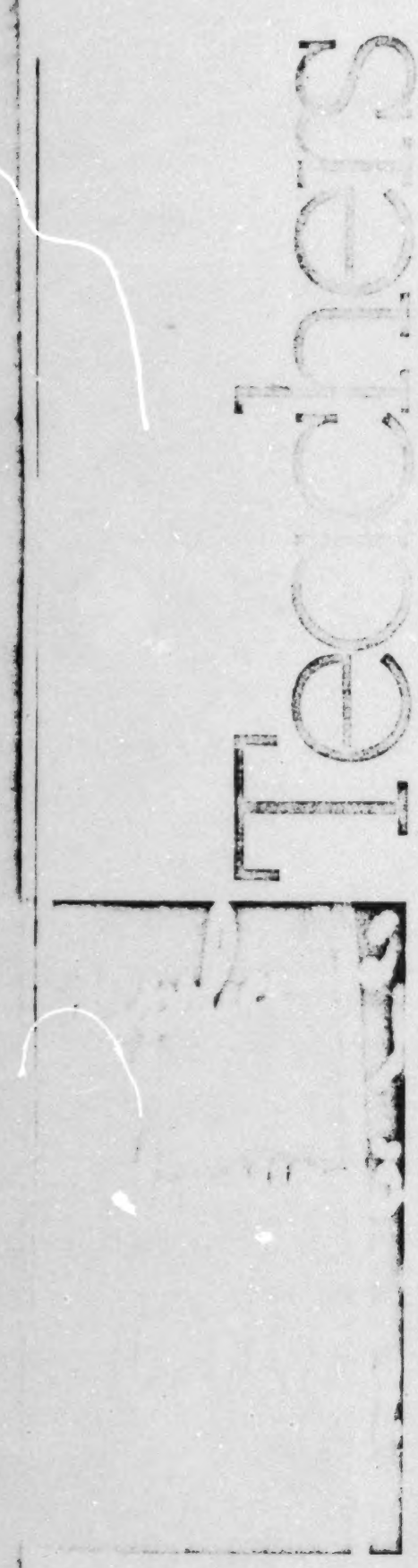

Part of the solution is to not be too quick to call every incident racial. Some could well be socio-economic.

Sometimes I think we get too uptight about things in front of kids.

You've got to get rid of a lot of these old teachers—black and white—they're set in their ways and don't care about the students.

The only way to change the whole problem is to change neighborhood patterns. Let the people live together. . . . Let the children play together and go to neighborhood schools together. . . . Then all the generalizations they whispered about will become unimportant.

One idea would be the reorientation of instruction for more awareness of the different needs of different children because of background. We must rely heavily on remedial aspects of areas. And I would make the community the focal point of the curriculum.

I think that special training is necessary for white teachers going into a black situation—particularly if it is in a poverty area. . . . Children know about things that the teachers have never heard of.

It's a matter of where do we stand, where did we come from, and where are we going?

The football team chose the homecoming queens — one black and one white—and the student body accepted their choices.

Vocational programs necessitate the students getting along to get the job done—whether they want to or not.

Maybe it's discrimination, too, but maybe you could bus children of like socio-economic backgrounds—black to white and white to black. . . . Maybe their values are similar.

Our principal is not a strong leader, but he allows good things to happen, which is better all the way around. He relies on advisory committees.

Many times you never become aware of anything unless someone shows us certain ideas. We're too wrapped up in our biases about everything.

The easiest solution is the bus. You aren't going to change neighborhoods right away. . . . If everyone would stop talking about it, it would be easy.

I work from the point of the individual. I live what I talk. . . . I like and trust all people until they prove to me I should not. . . . It has to be the individual.

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Prospective teachers need training in human relations and know-how for dealing with the severe racial problems that are going to be there.

Before the problems can be solved, both sides have to admit that the problems exist.

School events are not going to cause them to mix. There's got to be some kind of organized, planned event where the organizers say, "Look, this is our purpose. We want to get the blacks and whites together. We're going to have to put them on committees together deliberately without giving them the option to choose."

If you're going to serve on a human relations committee, you have to be convinced of something; you have to have some conviction. . . . Nothing is all black or all white. You have to look at it from both sides.

I took students to a county human relations meeting where they rapped at us teachers for hours. . . . They brought out many causes of unrest—one-sidedness of the music program, job discrimination, how teachers react to black kids and poor white youngsters. . . .

There needs to be a recognition of the human element.

If the dialogue would increase, the barriers would be let down much more quickly.

I try not to create either black or white situations in my class.

The physical education program has done a lot to minimize the black-white situation. It has given them equality. Industrial education has done the same thing.

It [black studies] has to be done subtly. Most [white] students resent being forced to study the blacks.

Involving students in facing problems has helped.

There's got to be more socializing between blacks and whites. Something's got to be done so that if you have an event you don't have the group of blacks over in one corner listening to the radio and the whites in another corner. There's got to be a way to get them to talk to each other and realize there may be differences but the differences are neither negative nor positive. They're just differences.

We work on the premise, "United we stand; divided we fall," with both black and white students.

Our community makes it difficult for a bigot to operate there.

We try to use a head-on or confrontation type thing when problems arise because of black-white friction. We try to solve it by talking. . . . Kids solve it themselves once they have a chance to think about it.

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Administrators

I prefer a school where both staff and student body are mixed. But we might as well understand that the school is unable to accomplish what society is not willing to accomplish.

I would like to see in all secondary schools courses in human relations; and every child would be expected to participate in one of these courses before he is allowed to graduate. . . . Actually, the courses should begin in elementary school.

I'm not so sure we should try to make ourselves color blind. . . . I'm not. . . .

When they send recruiters to out-of-state black colleges, recruiters have to have the power to hire.

I don't have an interview with a prospective teacher anymore without bringing up human relations.

I would rather get a new teacher with deep commitments toward human suffering and little knowledge about teaching—because we can develop that.

If we could reach the adults and make them see that what happened hundreds of years ago is not going to happen now. These are different times. And the grandchildren of people who lived hundreds of years ago are not responsible for what happened then. The white ones aren't; the black ones aren't.

Boards must give written guarantees of equal treatment for blacks. . . . Specific actions only will build trust on the part of blacks.

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In the teacher training institution there should be courses to help teachers prepare for what they're going to meet in the public schools—not only children of opposite races, but of their own races. For instance, a Jewish teacher could suffer very much from a Polish child or a Greek child. We have to do some revision, some thinking, some in-depth planning. ■

We believe that our board members need a course in race relations—but no one is brave enough to make the recommendation. □

You can't say how you'd solve school racial problems. You don't know until you meet each problem. □

Workshops will help some. But how often do you have them? . . . Some people dedicated themselves to change, but unless someone stays with them and follows up, it may be a case of commitment forgotten. ■

We must bring in people from the outside and say to teacher, "This is as much a part of your education as the teaching of reading." We have to say, "A person who demonstrates racial prejudice is not going to teach in our system—regardless of years of teaching." □

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I preach love to the children. If you love, you get love in return. ■

Maybe we ought to have some all white schools. Maybe there are enough people in this county who cannot or will not face up to learning to live with people. I'll bet if you put out a survey now you'd get a huge number of people who would like to have their children in that situation. □

You're going to have to put some teeth into human relations programs or take it out of the hands of local school administrators. □

I don't see anything wrong with asking some agency to come in and take a look at each school. □

When the school board gives a mandate for better human relations, workshops conducted by outside groups should be contracted for each each school. □

A staff has to come to some agreement on the things they're going to hold to so that everyone works in terms of certain standards and certain goals. □

The way to get the kids together is first to get the parents together. Parents are the problem. They start the problems early—not only by talk but by action. Children learn a lot by observing, and they listen a lot more than adults think they do. ■

Black people must dedicate themselves to improving the lot of black people. □

Teachers must make deliberate attempts to regroup children so they will not be segregated . . . new groups on a temporary basis for a specific purpose—using a great deal of ingenuity to maintain informality by racially mixing. □

I would like to see "readers" for the early elementary level showing good human relations. . . . □

We must encourage teachers to try to use multi-ethnic teaching methods immediately —not to wait to hear how others have used them. □

Educational TV should have TV programs at least once a week on human relations with lots of ideas for class discussions. ■

We are honoring requests from students to help plan curriculum content.

Black literature serves two purposes: it develops a greater sense of identity and pride on the part of the black people and also is an essential experience for white people to learn through literature what it is to be black.

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Afterword

The individuals speaking through this publication have set before us a maze of human relations problems—some, painfully familiar because of our personal experiences and others that we need to perceive more astutely. The problems will have had varying interpretations for each reader in his role as student, parent, teacher, or administrator.

Yet one single direction is apparent. If, in attempting to solve the problems, each of us strives to practice better human relations, our daily activities will need to become more studiously honest and fair. Decisions will need to reflect awareness of both majority and minority points of view.

The public justifiably expects the schools to practice good human relations. Poor human relations prevents good instruction from taking place and robs even the most capable students of their highest achievement. Human relations problems are especially critical among students who, because of fewer opportunities, have poor achievement, fail to develop confidence, or develop distorted self-concepts with many emotional problems.

In the two decades since the historic decision of the Supreme Court which struck down the "separate but equal doctrine," we have seen some bold and courageous efforts of some school administrators and teachers to overcome the racial handicaps of the past. We have likewise witnessed some flagrant acts of disregard and open defiance of the Court's interpretation of the Constitution. The facts which have been accumulated over centuries and the lessons learned during the past two decades require us to accept forthrightly our opportunity to build schools with better human relations and thus build a better America.

The need for formal change is implicit in the lists of problems and solutions proposed in this publication. I believe that the following changes require immediate attention: (1) the development and implementation of new, practical training programs for *all* school staff; (2) changes in the practices of systematically giving advantages to one group; (3) plans to equalize and share power and to utilize natural and normal conflicts; and (4) the establishment of new organizational structures and instructional patterns that will enable people to announce, cherish, and share their differences.

Significant changes can also be achieved without the structure of formal programs. If each reader could build honest awareness of problems and incentive for change into his own school environment, Maryland schools will be taking a giant step toward understanding.

Percy V. Williams

Percy V. Williams
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Compensatory, Urban,
and Supplementary Programs

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Evaluation Sheet

Please complete the following form, tear it from the booklet along the perforated edge, and mail it to:

Specialist in Human Relations
Division of Compensatory, Urban, and Supplementary Programs
Maryland State Department of Education
P.O. Box 8717, Friendship International Airport
Baltimore, Maryland 21240

1. Did this publication increase your awareness and understanding of the kinds of human relations problems in the school community?

   YES____NO____ COMMENTS:_____

2. Did you like the technique employed of excerpting dialogue from people in the school community?

   YES____NO____ COMMENTS:_____

3. Do you believe that this publication dealt with human relations honestly?

   YES____NO____ COMMENTS:_____

4. The individuals interviewed proposed directions for change. List the three ideas you believe hold the most promise.

   a._____

   b._____

   c._____

5. Would more publications in the field of human relations be helpful to you?

   YES____NO____If yes, what type of publication would you like to receive?

6. Indicate your role.

   ____parent (occupation and community role)_____

   ____student (grade)_____

   ____teacher (subject and grade)_____

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